per annum as per the National Forestry Action Programme. The Programme calls for alternative means and mechanism of fund mobilisation.

**Soil Degradation**

944. SHRI PREM CHAND GUPTA: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that soil degradation in India is a major factor affecting agricultural productivity;

(b) whether out of 328.7 mil. hectares of geographical area, 141.3 mil. hectares are subject to water and wind erosion and another 33.7 hectares are degraded due to special problems; and

(c) if so, what action Government are planning to reverse this trend?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI BABU LAL MARANDI): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) As per information provided by the Ministry of Agriculture, out of the total geographical area of the country (about 329 million ha.), 173 million ha. area is estimated to be degraded due to water and wind erosion and other problems like salinity, water logging, shifting cultivation etc. Of this, about 124.9 million ha. is affected by water and wind erosion.

(c) The Government has various centrally sponsored schemes to address the problem of soil degradation. The schemes of Ministry of Agriculture for improving agricultural productivity and to arrest soil degradation are: Watershed Development Projects in Shifting Cultivation Areas, Soil Conservation in the catchment of River Valley Projects and Flood Prone Rivers, National Watershed Development Project in Rainfed Areas, Reclamation of Alkali Soils and EEC assisted Alkali Land Reclamation and Development Programme. Some of the schemes of Ministry of Environment and Forests, which include soil conservation component, are: Integrated Afforestation and Eco-Development Projects Scheme, and Area

Oriented Fuelwood, Fodder Projects Scheme, and Conservation and Development of Non-Timber Forest Produce including Medicinal Plants Scheme. Similar activities are also taken up under the schemes operated by the Ministry of Rural Development. These are: Drought Prone Area Programme, Desert Development Programme and Integrated Wastelands Development Projects Scheme.

**Disposal of Solid Wastes**

945. SHRI GHUFRAN AZAM: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that quality of ground water and soil is being contaminated badly on account of present day methods of disposal of solid waste by land filling;

(b) whether Government have cealuated the environmental COSte and social costs caused by land filling; if so, what are the details in this regard; and

(c) if so, what steps are being taken to stop further land filling arrangements and adopt and environment-friendly agres being used in developed countries for permanent disposal of waste?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI BABU LAL MARANDI): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. To assess the status of municipal solid waste generation, collection, treatment and disposal, a study has been conducted by the Central Pollution Control Board covering 23 metro cities of the country. Studies on Management of Municipal Solid Waste in Class 1 and Class 2 cities and assessment of impact of pollution arising out of present day land filling has indicated threat of pollution to ground water and soil. A recent study conducted in Andhra Pradesh has assessed health impacts and costs arising from contamination of ground water due to run off from municipal solid waste landfills.

(c) A preliminary notification entitled, "Municipal Solid Waste" (Management and Handling) Rules, 1999 calling for objections and